Restructuring the power circles

723. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether in a bid to restrict the controversies like Dabhol Power Corporation and CESCO, Government has announced that it will restructure all the 450 power circles and invest Rs. 4,500 crore for strengthening the power distribution system during this fiscal year;

(b) if so, the main proposals that have been announced; and

(c) whether these have helped in strengthening the power disribution system?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI MEHTA): (a) to (c) The Government of India has launched Accelerated Power Development Programme (APDP) with the objective of providing systematic financing for (a) renovation & modernization & life extension of old generating stations and (b) upgradation of sub-transmission & distribution network in the country for financial turn around of the State Electricity Boards (SEBs). Under APDP a special category States get 100% for the project cost in the ratio of 90% grant and 10% central loan whereas 50% of the project cost for a non-special States is met under APDP in the form of half-grant and half-loan and for the balance 50% of the project cost is obtained as loan from Financial Institutions. The amount provided under APDP is released as additional Central Plan Assistance to the State Governments. Initially 63 distribution circles all over the country have been taken up for development as Centre of Excellence with the objectives of reducing T&D (technical as well as commercial) losses to 10-15% as against existing over 50% improving quality & reliability of power supply and customer satisfaction through investment in upgradation of sub-transmission & distribution network. Under the scheme, Rs.1000 crores was allocated during 2000-01 out of which Rs. 513 crores were provided for upgradation of sub-transmission & distribution network in the 63 circles. During the year 2001-02 Rs. 1500 crore has been provided for works in the identified distribution circles. It is proposed to take up all the circles in the country for upgradation of sub-transmission & distribution network during the 10th Plan. APDP is being used as a tool to engineer reforms in the distribution sector which is crucial to bringing commercial viability of the power sector, given the faci

that over 75% of total T&D losses almost entire commercial loss take place at distribution stage, apart from maximum customer interface. Distribution reform will bring about financial viability of the power sector to enable it to sustain private investment in the sector.

Implementation of short-term schemes *viz.* consumer meters, capacitor installation, replacement/ installation of distribution transforms and reconductoring sanctioned during 2000-01, have helped in improvement of revenue and reduction of outages in certain States. The schemes are under implementation.

Declaration of backward districts in Himachal Pradesh

†724. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the districts in Himachal Pradesh that have been declared backward by Government;

(b) what are the norms for assessing any district to be declared as backward;

(c) when was such an assessment made in Himachal Pradesh in the past; and

(d) by when the decision in respect of reassessing the backwardness of the districts of the State is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ANNASAHEB M. K. PATIL): (a) to (c) A committee (headed by the then Principal Adviser in the Planning Commission) was constituted in 1997 to, *inter-alia*, identify the 100 must backward and poorest districts in the country. The broad parameters adopted by the Committee to analyze the causes of backwardness, included indicators of deprivation (poverty ratio) and social and economic infrastructure. Keeping the above parameters in view, the Committee identified 100 most backward and poorest districts in the country including Hamirpur District of Himachal Pradesh.

(d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Revision of action plan for watershed schemes

725. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to revise the action plan for the ongoing watershed schemes according to the demand of the area

† Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.